

AMERICAN EMBASSY'S NATIONAL DAILY PRESS REVIEW

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1. Defense Minister says recent clashes fueled by pro-Gbagbo groups

2. Investments top 2012 budget

3. RTI broadcasts resume in Bouake

4. Home Affairs

1. Defense Minister says recent clashes fueled by pro-Gbagbo groups

According to the Ivorian Minister in charge of Defense, the recent deadly incidents in Sikensi and Vavoua were, in part, fueled by pro-Gbagbo groups. Speaking yesterday in the course of an interview with *Fraternite Matin* (p. 8), Mr. Paul Koffi Koffi underscored that hostility against FRCI elements in areas favorable to former president Laurent Gbagbo is being exacerbated by Gbagbo partisans. Mr. Koffi also denounced the proliferation of weapons in these zones, where arms caches have been reported. According to Mr. Koffi, though rogue FRCI elements are to blame in some cases, local residents, some of whom are armed civilians, are to some extent liable. He recommitted the government to working to ensure security throughout the country.

Still on security issues, *Le Temps* (p. 3) noted that the challenges posed by rogue FRCI elements is a hot potato in the hands of the Ivorian leader. The daily alleged that President Alassane Ouattara's recent drive to track down those individuals is not likely to yield results on the ground as those ad hoc forces have found alternative ways to operate.

With more on security issues, the United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) said it remains concerned about the numerous reports of human rights violations by members of the country's armed forces. Providing details, *Nord Sud Quotidien* (p. 3) noted that the announcement was made yesterday in the course of the mission's weekly press briefing. In a bid to efficiently monitor security, UNOCI spokesperson Mr. Kenneth Blackman said that joint patrols with Ivorian forces will be increased. He recommitted the UN to supporting Ivorian authorities in their efforts to restore security and promote peace.

Still on the issue, *L'Inter* (p. 3) noted that following rumors of coup attempts, measures have been jointly taken by the UN mission in Cote d'Ivoire and the Ivorian government to monitor security along the Liberian border.

2. Investments top 2012 budget

Officially adopted during Wednesday's cabinet meeting, the country 2012 budget of CFA Francs 3.16 trillion (approximately US \$6.2 billion) will allot CFA Francs 649 billion (US \$ 1.2 billion) to investment. The information was reported by Le Nouveau Reveil (p. 2) which noted that this will be a milestone in the history of the country. According to the daily, it underscored the government's commitment to restoring the country's war-torn economy and is in line with the economic growth rate of 8.5 percent forecast for 2012.

3. RTI broadcasts resume in former rebel stronghold city

State broadcaster RTI has reopened its Bouake office more than a decade after service in northern Cote d'Ivoire was suspended. The information was reported by L'Intelligent d'Abidjan (p. 12) which noted that the official ceremony was chaired yesterday in Bouake by the Ivorian Minister of Communication, Mr. Souleymane Diakite Coty. In his address, Mr. Coty called on RTI staff to carry out their work responsibly to avoid "falling into the mistakes of the past." Activities of RTI Bouake will begin with radio broadcasts, the paper added.

Still on media-related issues, Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3) noted that an Abidjan court has granted the release of Mr. Herman Aboa, an RTI journalist arrested in April for "allegedly calling for hatred and violence," during the post-electoral crisis. According to the same daily, Mr. Franck Kouassi, the former head of the Conseil National de la Communication Audiovisuel (CNCA), Cote d'Ivoire's former broadcast media regulatory agency, will also be released.

4. Home Affairs

On home affairs, the appeal by Gbagbo youth wing leader Charles Ble Goude has triggered comments in the press. Thus, Le Nouveau Courrier (p. 3) called Ivorian authorities to give due consideration to Mr. Ble Goude's proposal for a "new national consensus and dialogue". The paper argued that the drive could find common ground among the different political and military actors and open the door for lasting peace.

Note: Opposition newspaper Aujourd'hui was not published today; it has been suspended by the Conseil National de la Presse, Cote d'Ivoire's print media regulator.